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Pyramus

and Thisbe.

BY

FRANK RAYMOND HARRIS.



PRICE 15 CENTS



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Eldridge Entertainment House

Franklin, Ohio

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Shakespeare, William

Pyramus and Thisbe

The Burlesque Scenes From Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream

Arranged in Two Acts

With Full Stage Directions and Suggestions.

By FRANK RAYMOND HARRIS

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Eldridge Entertainment House

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PYRAMUS AND THISBE.

Synopsis.

The hard-handed Athenian mechanicals plan to present a play before Theseus, Duke of Athens, and his betrothed, Hippolyta, in honor of their approaching nuptials.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Spectators at the Play.

Theseus, Duke of Athens.

Demetrius, a Courtier.

Lysander, a Courtier.

Philostrate, Master of Revels.

Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.

Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

Characters in the Play.

Quince, a Carpenter, who gives the Prologue.

Snug, a Joiner, cast as the Lion.

Bottom, a Weaver, cast as Pyramus.

Flute, a Bellows Mender, cast as Thisbe.

Snout, a Tinker, cast as the Wall.

Starveling, a Tailor, cast as Moonshine.

PYRAMUS AND THISBE.

ACT I.

A Grove near Athens.

Bottom and his fellow-workmen meet to rehearse the play.

ACT II.

The Palace Grounds.

The play is presented before the Duke.

Time of Presentation—One Hour.

INTRODUCTION.

Shakespeare's *Midsommer Night's Dream* occupies a position absolutely unique in dramatic literature. It is altogether original and embodies one of the most beautiful conceptions that ever visited the mind of a poet. It is, as its name implies, a phantasmagory; a mask of shadows, full of marvels, surprises, splendor and grotesqueness. It is an intricate tangle of love stories, supported on the one side by the exquisite fancies of fairy life, on the other side by the broadest farce of the clowns and their unconscious burlesque of *Pyramus and Thisbe*.

Shakespeare has created out of "airy nothing" the delicate gossamer of a fairy world and peopled it with the phantoms of his marvelous imagination. He has accomplished this feat, not by external effects, but by the wonderful imagery of his verse; he appeals to the mind's eye rather than to the eye of sense; and he depends upon the co-operation of the spectator for the success of his fairy scenes.

In direct contrast to the poet's own method, he sets forth that of Bottom and the rude Athenian mechanicals, who propose to celebrate the Duke's nuptials with an interlude. They are determined to leave nothing to be supplied by the imagination. Wall must be plastered; Moonshine must carry lantern and bush of thorns; every detail must be carried out with absolute literalness. The result is a burlesque, worthy of Shakespeare's genius. It is a keen but kindly satire upon the expedients of the Elizabethan stage and its humor is none the less enjoyable because the authors of it are so entirely unconscious of their own absurdity.

In separating the burlesque scenes from the fairy scenes, an effort has been made to do as little violence to the text of Shakespeare as possible. The first act, "The Rehearsal," is made up of several short scenes. The connective passages have necessarily been altered and a few passages added to preserve the sense of the original. With the exception of the transposition of two short speeches in the second act, no further changes have been made.

In its present form, *Pyramus and Thisbe* does not possess the fragmentary character that isolated scenes from dramas so often possess. Its story may be understood and appreciated by an audience, unversed in Shakespearean lore, without a previous knowledge of the connection in which the scenes were originally used. It is well within the scope of amateurs and is peculiarly suited to Commencement exercises where a play of literary merit, not too long in the presentation, is desired.

SUGGESTIONS.

Pyramus and Thisbe is a burlesque, pure and simple, and it should be played in the spirit of burlesque. The Athenian mechanicals may do the most ridiculous things but they must do them in deadly earnest. Bottom and his fellows take themselves in all seriousness, however the spectators may regard them. There is ample opportunity throughout the play for by-play but it should be free and spontaneous and not forced. The suggestions for stage business are intended to be suggestive and not exhaustive. The clever actor will discover many opportunities to round out his part. In the second act, where Bottom and Flute impersonate *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the declamatory passages should be given in mock-heroic style, with many gestures.

Bottom is an overweening egotist; the others are his humble admirers. Much of the success of the production depends upon the acting of Bottom and great care should be exercised in casting the part. If a boy of slight build is cast as the Lion, it will add to the effectiveness of the part. The weaker the roars he emits, the more effective they will be.

The scrolls used by the players may be made of brown cloth with a stick at each end, so that they may be rolled up.

CHARACTERS.

There are speaking parts for ten male characters and one female character. As many spectators, male and female, may be added as desired. Two of the male parts, *Lysander* and *Philostrate*, may be assumed by girls. In

this event, it would be well to change the name of Lysander to Helena on the program. The entire cast may be made up of girls, if desired.

STAGE SETTING.

If the play is given in a well-equipped theatre, the problems of stage management are readily solved. The scene is unimportant. In the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, most of the rehearsal scenes take place in Quince's house and the play itself is presented in an apartment of the palace. It is more effective to place both scenes out-of-doors. Even in the well-equipped theatre, it adds greatly to the beauty of the presentation, to bank the stage with boughs and potted plants.

A very pretty and inexpensive stage setting may be made by the use of wide-meshed chicken wire for background and wings, interwoven with boughs and twigs. The same setting will be suitable for both acts.

No set-pieces are required in the first act. In the second, one seat only is required. This should be covered with a fur robe or painted to represent a marble bench. Theseus and Hippolyta are seated on this bench at the extreme right. The spectators group themselves behind them. In case a large number of spectators is desired, some may be stationed upon the extreme left.

Only three entrances are required; one at the center (C); one at the right (R); and a third at the left (L). Both the right and left entrances should be at the rear of the stage.

COSTUMES.

The costumes are Greek, and in case they cannot be readily rented from theatrical costumers, they may be made with little difficulty. Cheese cloth may be used but a better material is sateen. For the female characters, make a long robe, with short sleeves and low neck, very much like a Mother Hubbard. Over this, the himation is draped. This consists of a piece of cloth, 12 feet long and 6 feet wide and may be draped around the shoulders and body to suit the wearer's fancy. Both the himation and the undergarment should be

trimmed with a broad border of some Greek design. The border may be made of silver or gilt paper, sewed upon the garment, or better still, a stencil may be cut from card-board and the design painted upon the garment in gold, silver or other colors. This design may consist of the Greek border shown in so many pictures of Greek costumes, of leaves and flowers, or even of one or two narrow stripes.

For the male characters, make short tunics, reaching above the knees and fastened with belts at the waist. Over this the himation may be draped or it may be dispensed with entirely. The above costumes are appropriate for the spectators, who may be as few or as numerous as desired. In getting up the costumes, aim at variety, grace and beautiful colors. The following suggestions may be of assistance: green with a border of gold; light blue and silver; deep blue and white; orange and black or gold; white and blue; red and gold or black; black and silver or white; brown and gold; gray and silver. A very pleasing effect may be obtained by using different colors for the undergarment and the drapery. For example, a himation of green trimmed with gold, may be draped over a tunic of orange trimmed with black.

The male characters should wear a band of gold, about an inch in thickness, about the head. This may be made from gilt paper, pasted on cloth. A Psyche knot, with fluffy hair, held in place by a fillet, wound two or three times around the hair, is an appropriate head dress for the female characters. A broad band of gold may be worn both by the male and female characters around the arm, between the elbow and the shoulder. If sandals cannot be procured, low slippers form a satisfactory substitute. The male characters should wear pink or white hose and bind the ankles and feet with strips of cloth, in harmony with the costumes.

The costumes of some of the prominent characters require special attention.

Theseus should wear a short tunic of white, richly embroidered with gold, with a long cape of deep red.

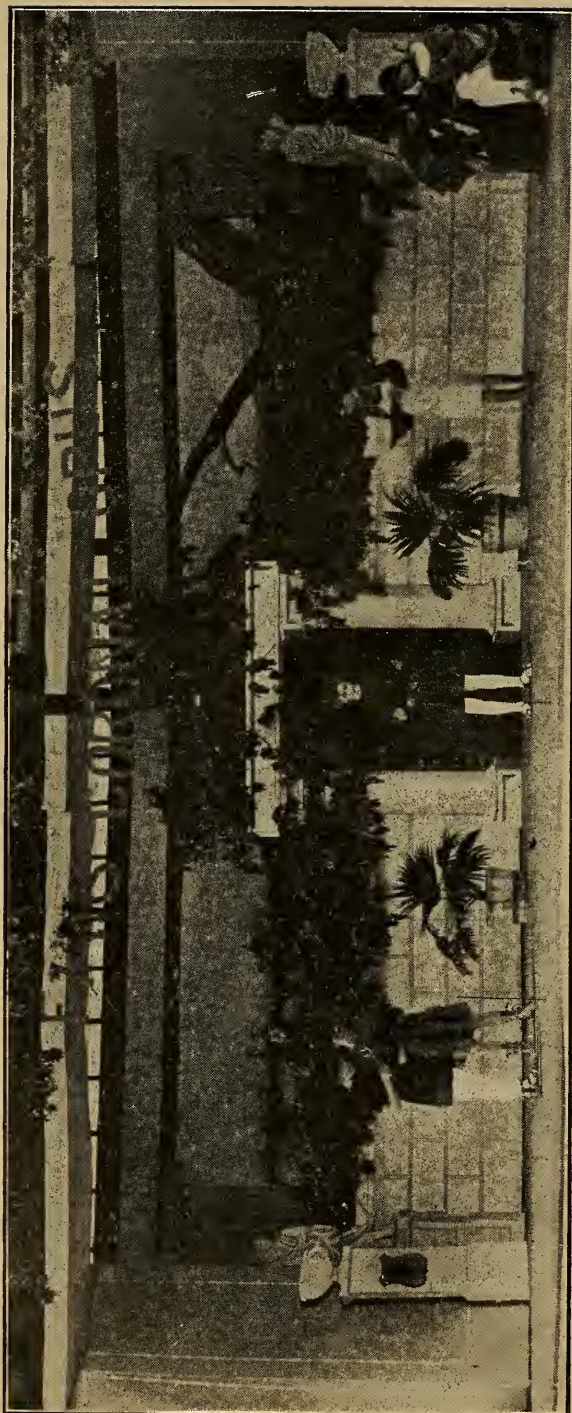
He should wear a helmet or crown upon his head. Another appropriate costume would be a long robe of red richly embroidered, with heavily-jeweled turban.

Hippolyta should wear a long flowing robe that sweeps the ground. The more richly it is stenciled and embroidered, the better. She also wears a crown.

Bottom and his fellow-workmen should be clad in short tunics of some dark material, with belts. There should be no drapery. Several changes of costume are necessary in the second act. Bottom should wear a gaudy tunic with a cape. He wears a helmet and carries a sword. Flute, who represents a woman, should be so attired. His himation should be worn so that it may readily be dropped. Snug, who represents the Lion, should wear some material around his shoulders that would suggest the lion's skin. The lion's head may be fashioned out of heavy paper, appropriately painted.

Snout, who presents the Wall, may cover himself with lime and dirt and carry a stone in his hand, or he may have a wall painted on card-board and suspended from his shoulders, in the manner in which the sandwich-men carry their advertisements.

Starveling carries a lantern, suspended on a pole, a bundle of thorn twigs, and leads a dog. The lantern is easily made of card-board, open on all four sides and painted black.



ACT I. PYRAMUS AND THISBE.

Pyramus and Thisbe.

ACT I.

A Grove near Athens.

(Starveling enters from R, with three-legged stool and piece of cloth. Crosses to L front, seats himself and begins to sew. Bottom and Snout enter from L, Flute and Snug from R, engaged in conversation. They meet at R C. and greet each other. Flute enters from C with a bundle of scrolls, and after looking around, begins to speak. There is ample opportunity for by-play in this scene.)

Quince. Is all our company here?

Bottom. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quin. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the Duke and Duchess on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

Quin. Marry, our play is "The most lamentable Comedy and most cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe."

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry.—Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll.—Masters, spread yourselves.

(Bottom's speech "A very good piece of work, etc.," is addressed to Flute. "Now, good Peter Quince" is addressed to Quince. Bottom pauses when he says "Masters" and Snug, Flute and Snout gather around him. Then he throws out his arms saying, "Spread yourselves.")

Quin. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom the Weaver.

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus? a lover or a tyrant?

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallantly for love.

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest.—Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Eracles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison-gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty!—Now name the rest of the players.—This is Eracles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover's is more condoling.

(The first part of Bottom's speech is addressed to Quince. Then he turns to Snout with "Yet my chief humour." "The raging rocks" should be given with great declamatory effect. "Now name the rest of the players" is addressed to Quince. Then he turns back to Snout with "This is Eracles' vein, etc.")

Quin. Francis Flute the Bellows Mender.

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You must take Thisbe on you.

Flu. What is Thisbe? a wandering knight?

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

(*All crowd around Flute, feeling his face to see if the beard is actually coming. They make gestures of dissent.*)

Quin. That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bot. And I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe, too: I'll speak in a monstrous little voice; Thisne, Thisne,—Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisbe dear, and lady dear!

Quin. No, no; you must play Pyramus:—and, Flute, you Thisbe.

Bot. Well, proceed.

Quin. Robin Starveling the Tailor.

(*Starveling has been industriously engaged with his sewing all the time.*)

Star. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robert Starveling, you must play Thisbe's mother.—Tom Snout the Tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisbe's father;—Snug the Joiner, you, the lion's part:—and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

(*Quince turns and addresses each one as he calls his name. He starts to roll up the scroll from which he has been reading.*)

Snug. (*Anxiously, holding out his hand.*) Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion, too; I will roar, that I will do any man's heart glad to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the Duke say, "Let him roar again, let him roar again."

Quin. And you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

All. (*shaking their heads dolefully*). That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus.

(*Bottom, in anger, starts to leave. Snout, Flute and Snug run after him and in pantomime try to persuade him to return. Quince follows him and speaks.*)

Quin. For Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man as one shall see in a Summer's day; a most lovely, gentleman-like man: Therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot. (*returning*). Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, or your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

Quin. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play bare-faced.—But, masters, here are your parts.

(*Quince distributes the scrolls. Each takes his part and begins to scan it, rehearsing his lines in pantomime. Snug goes off by himself and begins to roar. This scene can be made very effective. Finally Bottom speaks.*)

Bot. Come, let us rehearse our parts obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect.

Quin. Here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our 'tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the Duke.

(*Bottom has been pointing out to Flute certain defects in the play and both nod their disapproval.*)

Bot. Peter Quince,—

Quin. What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this Comedy of Pyramus and Thisbe that will never please.

(Flute nods vigorous assent. Quince and the others look alarmed.)

Bot. First, Pyramus must draw his sword and kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

Snout. By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

Starv. *(still seated on his stool, his attention divided between his scroll and his sewing).* I believe we must leave the killing out when all is done.

Bot. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

Bot. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

(Snug, who has been standing near Starveling at this moment utters a roar and Starveling falls off his stool.)

Starv. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in—God shield us!—a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing; and we ought to look to it.

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell that he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,—Ladies,—or, Fair ladies,—I would wish you,—

or, I would request you,—or, I would entreat you,—not to fear, not to tremble; my life for yours. If you think that I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are:—and here, indeed, let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the Joiner.

(Bottom's speech to the ladies should be given with extravagant gestures. Snug should try to imitate his bows and gestures.)

Quin. Well, let it be so. But there is two hard things,—that is to bring the moonlight into the chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisbe meet by moonlight.

Snug. Doth the moon shine the night we play our play?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar; look in the almanac.

(All crowd around Quince who consults a calendar.)

Bot. *(running his finger down the scroll)*. Find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber-window open, where we play our play, and the Moon may shine in at the casement.

Quin. Ay, or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine. Then there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisbe, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Snug. You can never bring in a wall.—What say you, Bottom?

Bot. Some man or other must present wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisbe whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts.

(*All seat themselves and open their scrolls. Snug, who has no scroll looks over Starveling's shoulder.*)

Quin. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake;—and so every one according to his cue.

(*Bottom strikes an attitude near the center of the stage.*)

Quin. Speak, Pyramus.—Thisbe stand forth.

(*Flute takes his place opposite Bottom.*)

Pyr. (*reading*). Thisbe, the flowers of odious savour sweet,—

Quin. (*prompting*). Odours, odours.

Pyr. (*consults his scroll*).

—odours savour sweet:

So doth thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear.

But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile,

And by-and-by I will to thee appear. (*Exit Pyr. R.*)

This. (*to Quin*). Must I speak now?

Quin. Ay, marry, bust you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

This. (*reads rapidly*).

Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely jew,
As true as truest horse, that never yet would tire,
'Till meet you Pyramus at Ninny's tomb.

Quin. Ninus' tomb, man; why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all.—Pyramus, enter: your cue is past; it is, never tire.

This. As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire. Pyramus re-enters.

Pyr. An if I were, fair Thisbe, I were only thine;
And thou, fair Thisbe, were then a swine—

Quin. Mine, man, not swine. But I see, masters, that we can make no headway with this play until all of you have conned your parts. Meet me here tomorrow night by moonlight: here will we rehearse again. Just before we present our play before the Duke. And you, Bottom, see that you fail us not.

(After Quince has corrected him, Bottom goes off to one side and sulks. The rest now crowd around him anxiously.)

Flu. If you come not, then the play is marr'd; it goes not forward, doth it? *(to Quince.)*

Quin. It is not possible; there is not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but Bottom.

Flu. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

(The others nod vigorous assent.)

Quin. Yea, and the best person, too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Snout. You must say paragon: a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Flu. If the Duke give him not six-pence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged.

Snug. You will come, won't you, Bottom?

(The compliments have had their effect and Bottom has gradually ceased to sulk.)

Bot. Yes I will come, for I would not disappoint the Duke.

Snug. *(slapping him on the back).* Oh sweet, bully Bottom!

Quin. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties such as our play wants. But I beg of you, masters, tell no one of our design or we shall be dogg'd with company and all our devices known before we present the play at the Duke's nuptials.

Bot. Never fear, we shall tell no man.

Quin. And good masters, get your apparel together,

good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; every man look o'er his part for I am sure that our play shall be preferred. In any case, let Thisbe have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out of the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions or garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet comedy.

Bot. Enough, hold or cut the bow strings.

(Exeunt all slowly, reading and rehearsing their parts in pantomime, the lion roaring. Bottom may, if desired go out, singing the following song entirely out of tune):

The ousel-cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill;—
The finch, the sparrow and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay;—

ACT II.

The Palace Grounds.

(A flourish of trumpets. Theseus, Hippolyta and attendants enter. Theseus and Hippolyta advance to the footlight. The other group themselves in the rear.)

Thes. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

Hip. Four days will quickly steep themselves in
nights;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow,

Now bent in heaven, shall behold the night
of our solemnities.

Thes. But come. (*Leads Hippolyta to seat at R front. She seats herself but Theseus remains standing.*)

Thes. (*looking around*).

What masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
(*to Demetrius*). Call Philostrate.

(*Demetrius steps to Central entrance and summons Philostrate. Theseus seats himself. Philostrate enters.*)

Phil. (*bowing*).

Here, mighty Theseus.

Thes. Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?

What masque? what music? How shall we
beguile

The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Phil. (*handing him a scroll*).

There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your Highness will
see first.

Thes. (*reads*).

The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.

(*glancing up*)

We'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.—

(*reads*)

The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.

(*glancing up*)

That is an old device; and it was play'd
When I from Thebes last came a conqueror.—

(*reads*)

The thrice three muses mourning for the death

Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.—

(*glancing up*)

That is some keen satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.—

(*reads*)

A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.

(*glancing up*)

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous swarthy snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

Phil (*displays great merriment during this speech*).

A play it is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,
Made my eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

Thes. What are they that do play it?

Phil. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
Who never labored in their minds till now;
And now have toil'd their unbreathed memo-
ries

With this same play, against your nuptial.

Thes. And we will hear it.

Phil. No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sports in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel
pain,
To do you service.

Thes. I will hear that play;
For never anything can be amiss,

When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in.

(Philostrate bows himself out.)

Thes. Take your places, ladies.

(Some group themselves behind Theseus and Hippolyta on the R. Others on the extreme left. Demetrius and Lysander stand so that some of Theseus' remarks may be addressed to them.)

Hip. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,
And duty in his service perishing.

Thes. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

Hip. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

Thes. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.

Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:
And what poor willing service cannot do,
Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.

Where I have come, great clerks have purposed

To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
When I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practiced accents in their fears,
And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.

Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity,
In least, speak most, to my capacity.

(Re-enter Philostrate.)

Phil. *(bowing).*

So please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.

Thes. Let him approach.

(Philostrate steps to the entrance at C. Flourish of trumpets from without. Quince enters.)

Quin. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider, then, we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to content you,
Our grue intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here. That you should here re-
pent you,
The actors are at hand; and by their show,
You shall know all that you are like to know.

(Quince bows and exit.)

Thes. This fellow does not stand upon points.

Lys. He has rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

Hip. Indeed he has play'd on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

Thes. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

(Enter Quince as the Presenter with Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion. The Lion is frightened and tries to run away but the others pull him on. During the presentation of the Play, the spectators should act as spectators would naturally act under the circumstances. They should show their appreciation of the good points and reward the actors with frequent applause.)

Quin. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth makes all things
plain.

This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
(Pyramus steps forward and bows low.)

This beautious lady, Thisbe is certain.

(Thisbe steps forward and bows.)

This man *(Wall steps forward)* with loam and
rough cast, doth present

Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers
sunder;

And through wall's chink, poor souls, they are
content

To whisper; at the which let no man wonder.
This man, (*Moonshine steps forward*) with
lantern, dog and bush of thorns,

Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which lion hight by name,
(*Lion is pushed forward by his companions*)

The trusty Thisbe, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,

Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisbe's mantle slain:

Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful
blade,

He bravely broached his boiling bloody breast;
And Thisbe, tarrying in the mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain,
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

(*Exeunt Quince, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion and Moon-
shine. Wall remains. Audience applauds.*)

Thes. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

Dem. No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when
many asses do.

Wall. (*coming forward*).

In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and
Thisbe,
Did whisper often secretly.

This loam, this rough cast, and this stone,
doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this, the cranny is, right and sinister,
(*Holds out two fingers.*)
Through which the fearful lovers are to
whisper.

Thes. (*to Demetrius*). Would you desire lime and
hair to speak better?

Dem. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard
discourse, my lord.

(*Pyramus appears at C.*)

Thes. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Pyr. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so
black!

O night, which ever art when day is not!

O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,

I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot!—

And thou, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
That standst between her father's ground and
mine!

Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with
mine eyne!

(*The Wall holds up fingers. Pyramus bows low.*)

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well
for this.

(*Looks through the chink.*)

But what see I? No Thisbe do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me.

(*These verses and those which follow should be given
in a mock-heroic style, with great declamatory effect and
many gestures.*)

Thes. (*to Hippolyta*). The wall, methinks, being
sensible, should curse again.

(*Pyramus hears the remark and turns to Theseus.*)

Pyr. No, in truth, sir, he should not. Deceiving me is Thisbe's cue: She is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You will see that it will fall pat as I told you.

(Thisbe appears at C.)

Pyr. Yonder she comes.

This. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyr. *(listening).*

I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face.—
Thisbe! *(calls through the chink).*

This. My love! thou art my love, I think.

Pyr. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

This. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

This. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyr. O, kiss me through the chink of this vile wall!

(They attempt to kiss.)

This. I kiss the wall and not your lips at all.

Pyr. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

This. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

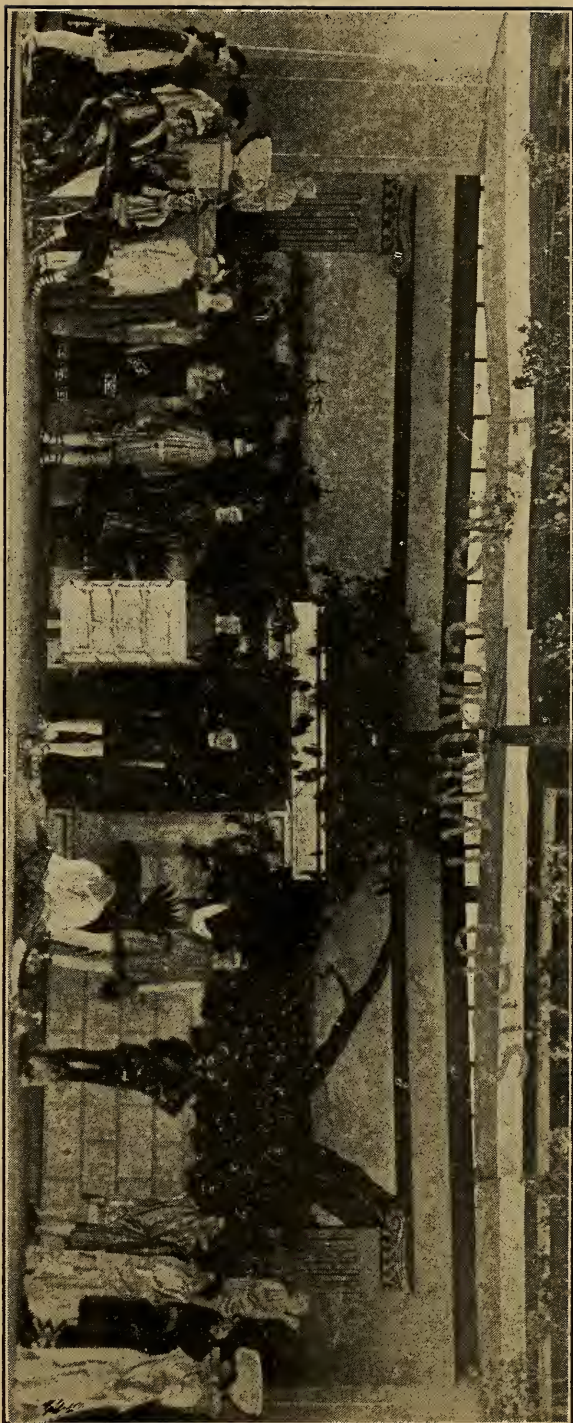
(Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe both at C.)

Wall. Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus wall away doth go.

(Exit Wall at C. Applause.)

Thes. *(to Demetrius).* Now is the mural down between the two neighbors.

Dem. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.



ACT II. PYRAMUS AND THISBE.

Hip. (*in disgust*). This is the silliest stuff that e'er I heard.

Thes. (*to Hippolyta*). The best in kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hip. It must be your imagination then, not theirs.

Thes. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men.

(*Lion and Moonshine appear at C.*)

Thes. Here come two noble beasts, a man and a lion.

Lion. (*evidently frightened*).

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on
floor,

May now perchance both quake and tremble
here,

While lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

Then know that I one Snug the Joiner am,

No lion fell, nor else no lion's dam;

For, if I should as lion come in strife

Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

Thes. (*to Demetrius*.) A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

Thes. (*to Lysander*). True; and a goose for his discretion.

Dem. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

Thes. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion; and let us listen to the Moon.

(*Starveling carries a lantern fastened on a pole, a bundle of thorns and leads a dog. By slightly changing Starveling's speeches, the dog may be dispensed with. Starveling has an excellent opportunity for by-play in*

his effort to manage all his paraphernalia.)

Moon. This lantern doth the horned Moon present;—

Dem. (to *Theseus*). He should have worn the horns on his head.

Thes. He is not crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

Moon. This lantern doth the horned moon present;
Myself the Man in the Moon do seem to be.

Thes. (to *Demetrius*, *laughing*). This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the Man in the Moon?

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, he is already in snuff.

Hip. (in *disgust*). I am a-weary of this Moon: would he would change!

Thes. (to *Hippolyta*). It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is already in the wane; but yet, in all courtesy, we must stay the time.

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say is, to tell you that the lantern is the Moon; I, the Man in the Moon; this thorn bush, my thorn bush; this dog, my dog.

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lantern; for all these are in the Moon.

(*Thisbe appears at C.*)

Dem. But, silence! here comes *Thisbe*.

This. This is old *Ninny's* tomb. (*looks around*). Where is my love?

(*The Lion has been wandering about uneasily. He now rushes on Thisbe roaring. Thisbe shrieks, drops her mantle and runs off. Great applause and laughter on the part of the spectators.*)

Dem. Well roar'd lion.

Thes. Well run, *Thisbe*.

Hip. Well shone, Moon.—(to *Theseus*) Truly the moon shines with a good grace.

(Lion tears Thisbe's mantle.)

Thes. Well moused, lion.

(Exit lion.)

Lys. And so the lion vanished.

(Pyramus appears at C.)

Dem. And then came Pyramus.

Pyr. *(addressing the Moon).*

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny
beams;

I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so
bright;

For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering
gleams,

I trust to taste of truest Thisbe's sight.

(discovers Thisbe's mantle. Starts back in horror.)

But stay,—O spite!—but mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see? how can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear!

(Takes up her mantle and holds it to his breast.)

Thy mantle good, what, stain'd with blood?
Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come, cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude and quell!

Thes. *(to Hippolyta, trying to restrain his laughter).*
This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go
near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart but I pity the man.

Pyr. O, wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is—no, no,—which was the fairest
dame

That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd
with cheer.

*(Pyramus forgets his part at "Which is—no, no,—
which was" and is compelled to consult his scroll.)*

Pyr. (*continues*).

Come, tears, confound; out, sword and wound
The pap of Pyramus,—(*draws his sword.*)

Ay, that left pap, where heart doth hop;

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus. (*Stabs himself.*)

Now am I dead, now am I fled;

My soul is in the sky:

Tongue, loose thy light! Moon take thy flight!

(*waves to the Moon to withdraw. Exit Moon.*)

Now die, die, die, die, die. (*Applause.*)

(*Pyramus dies very deliberately. After stabbing himself repeatedly he sinks to the floor, arranging himself in a comfortable position.*)

Dem. (*laughing*). Not die, but an ace for him; for he is but one.

Lys. (*to Demetrius*). Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

Thes. (*to Lysander*). With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover and prove an ass.

Hip. (*to Theseus*). How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

Thes. She will find him by starlight.

(*Thisbe enters at C.*)

Thes. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

Hip. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

Dem. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us,—she for a woman, God bless us.

(*Thisbe has been looking around and finally she spies Pyramus.*)

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

Dem. And thus she moans, videlicet:

(*Thisbe kneels beside Pyramus and shakes him.*)

This. Asleep, my love? what dead my dove?
 O Pyramus, arise!
 Speak, speak. Quite dumb? Dead, dead? a
 tomb
 Must cover thy sweet eyes.
 These lily lips, this cherry nose,
 These yellow cowslip cheeks,
 Are gone, are gone: lovers, make moan:
 His eyes were green as leeks.
 O Sisters Three, come, come to me,
 With hands as pale as milk;
 Lay them in gore, since you have shore
 With shears his thread of silk.
 Tongue, not a word: come, trusty sword;
 Come, blade, my breast imbrue: (*Stabs her-
 self.*)
 And, farewell, friends,—thus *Thisbe* ends,—
 Adieu, adieu, adieu. (*Dies.*)

(The possibilities of this speech will be evident. Thisbe stabs herself with Pyramus' sword which she has great difficulty in securing as Pyramus has fallen upon it. After stabbing herself, Thisbe turns with "Farewell, friends," and bows to the spectators. She then falls across the body of Pyramus. Spectators loudly applaud.)

Thes. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Dem. Ay, and Wall, too.

Bot. (*starting up and addressing the Duke*). No. I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

Thes. (*to Bottom*). No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. (*Turns to Hippolyta.*) Marry, if he that writ it had play'd Pyramus and hanged himself in *Thisbe's* garter, it would have been a fine tragedy. (*Turns again to Bottom.*) And so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone.

(*The Bergomask was a rustic dance in imitation of the people of Bergamasco, a province in the state of Venice, who are ridiculed as being more clownish in their manners and dialect than any other people of Italy. The dance may be omitted; in that event, Theseus omits his last speech, Bottom assists Flute to his feet, they bow and retire.—Theseus and Hippolyta rise.*)

Thes. The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:
Lovers to bed; 'tis almost fairy-time.
I fear we shall outsleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled
The heavy gait of night.—Sweet friends, to
bed.—

A fortnight hold we this solemnity
In nightly revels and new jollity.

(*Exeunt Theseus and Hippolyta, with their retinue to music.*)

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